



CHIEF's Sight Picture

16 September 2004

Recognizing the Responsibility of Command

Leading Airmen as a commander of a wing, group, or squadron is one of the most important and challenging opportunities in our Air Force. Two years ago, Secretary Roche and I put into action two initiatives for commanders charged with leading the men and women of our Air Force. First, we authorized wear of the command insignia. Today, commanders across the Air Force are justifiably proud to wear this distinctive badge of leadership. Secondly, we instituted Commander Responsibility Pay (CRP) as an additional way to recognize and emphasize the leadership responsibilities of command.

Congress authorized CRP in 1958 and by Law, each service is authorized to pay up to 10% of their service members in each of their command ranks of Colonel, Lieutenant Colonel, and Major. Over the past two years you have embraced the Air Expeditionary Force and tackled the overwhelming demands of dealing with new and evolving threats to our national security. In so doing, you enabled Joint Force Commanders to call upon the best air and space forces in history to help liberate more than 50 million people in two different countries. Because of our critical expeditionary commitments, the number of command positions has grown beyond our Congressional authority to pay them.

Consequently, we must adapt our CRP structure and reduce the number of command positions qualifying for CRP. Consistent with our focus on the AEF, warfighting, and deployed operations, we will designate specific command billets for CRP based on one or more of the following characteristics:

- Likelihood of deploying to a combat zone
- Uniqueness or criticality of primary mission
- Deployment for a year or more

Commanders at all levels, in every mission area, and at every location, are vital to our Air Force's success. The tremendous care we take in identifying and selecting our commanders testifies to the value we place on command. The change to CRP will not affect wear of the "command insignia" which is an Air Force initiative not governed by any statutes. Command is the most important task in our Air Force. I thank all commanders for the tremendous job you have done accomplishing the mission and taking care of the Airmen in your charge.




AIR FORCE
Air & Space Power